

Mermaids drown Animal Planet's ratings record

by [James Hibberd](#)

he most-watched telecast in Animal Planet's history is about mermaids.

Sunday's *Mermaids: The New Evidence* delivered 3.6 million viewers, shattering the network's ratings record. Yup, even bigger than the Puppy Bowls.

Let's take a moment to appreciate this. Animal Planet is 17 years old. The channel is dedicated to series and specials about the natural world. And the most-watched program in its history is about a non-existent creature — not even a remotely believable non-existent creature! There's about 2 million cataloged species on the planet, and what breaks through? Mermaids. Then again, maybe it's not so surprising — the network's previous record holder was *Dragons: A Fantasy Made Real*.

"The phenomenon of *Mermaids* has truly been a watershed – and a watercooler – moment for Animal Planet," said Animal Planet president Marjorie Kaplan, presumably with some degree of reluctance. "These extraordinary television specials have electrified, challenged and entertained television audiences and online fans alike."

Mermaids: The New Evidence is the network's follow-up to its purported documentary, [later revealed to be a hoax](#), *Mermaids: The Body Found*. As the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration bluntly puts it: "No evidence of aquatic humanoids has ever been found."